

**MARVEL**

MARK WAID

MIKE WIERINGO

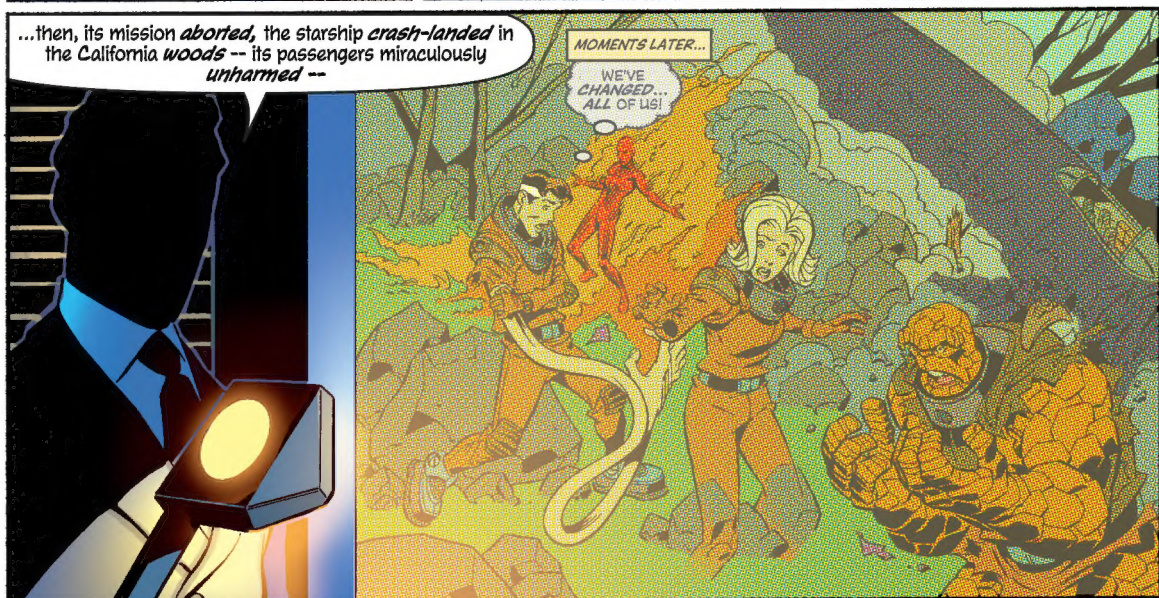
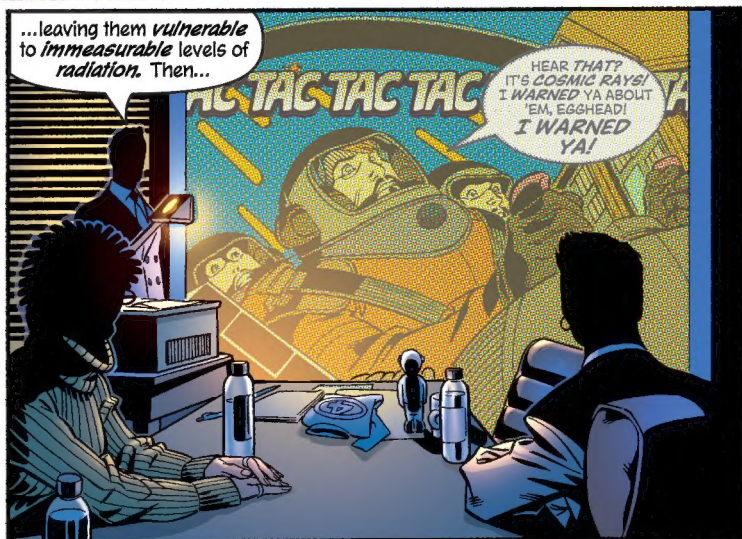
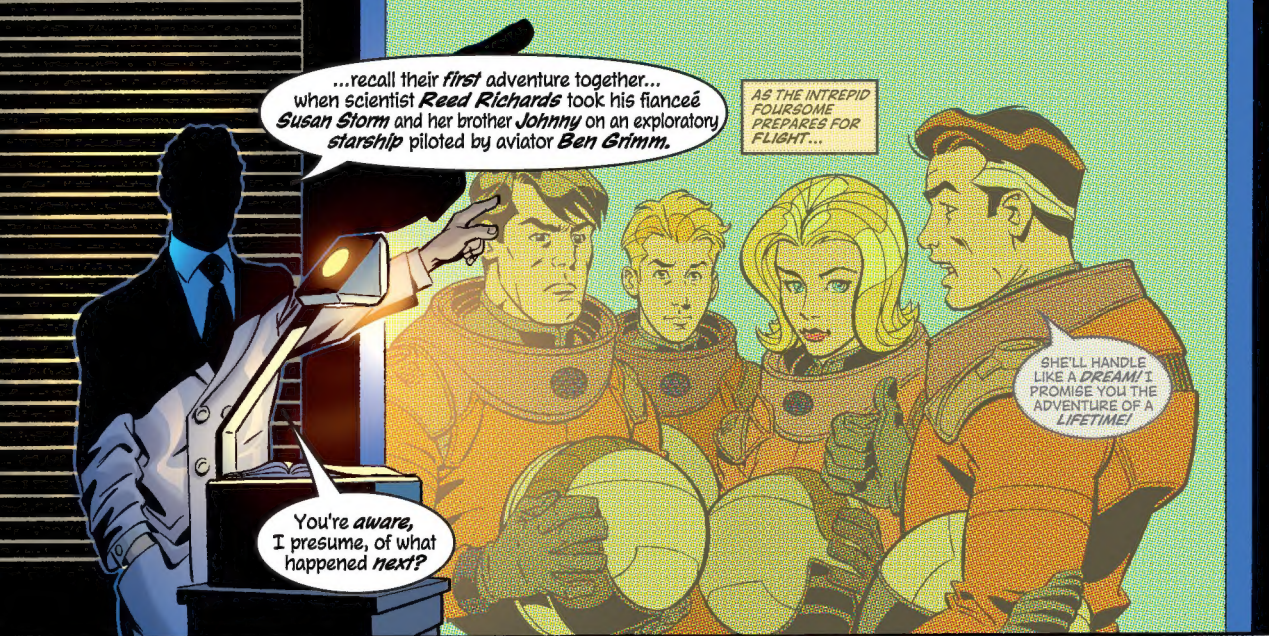
KARL KESEL

60

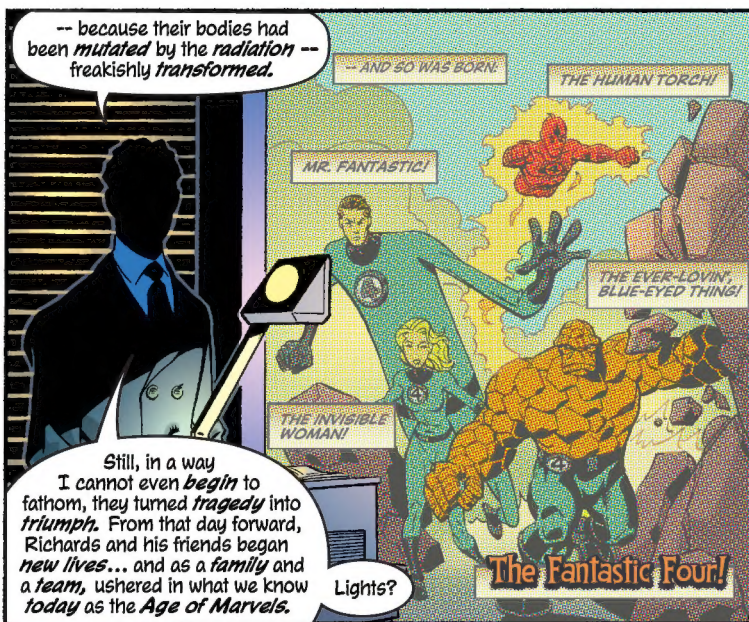
# FANTASTIC FOUR<sup>®</sup>



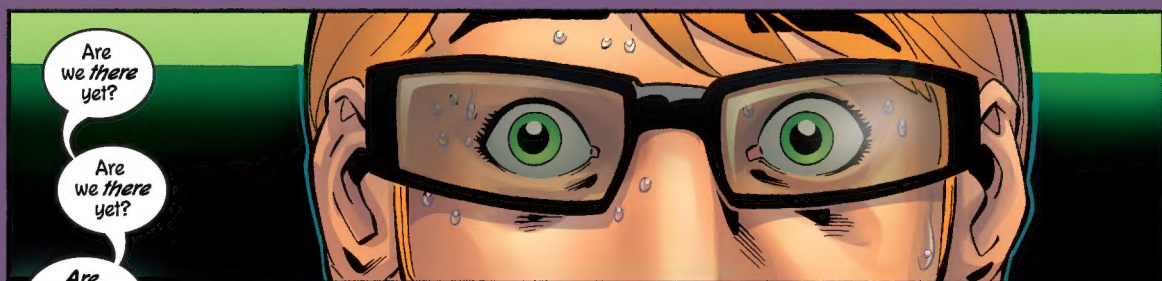












Are we there yet?

Are we there yet?

Are we **THERE** yet?

Ha! I knew it!

Reed toldja t'drain the lizard before we left, Matchstick!

And this is your business *how*? All those who even remember *owning* a reptile, raise your *hands*.



Johnny! Ben! Please!

Hey!

Why, you...!

Oops.



You did that on purpose! *SuuuUuee!* Ben threw his *Coke* at me and the... the *Guy!*

It was an *accident*, ya squirt! These mitts ain't exactly made f'r *high tea*, y'know!

Shertzter.

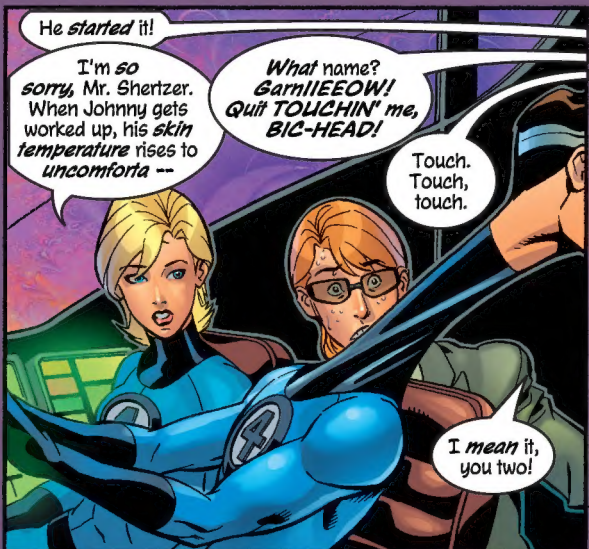


'Sides, you're still *sore* ya got dumped by Jennifer *Gay*

I don't want to hear that name!

*SSSSSS*

Will you two *knock it off*? We have a *guest!*



He *started* it!

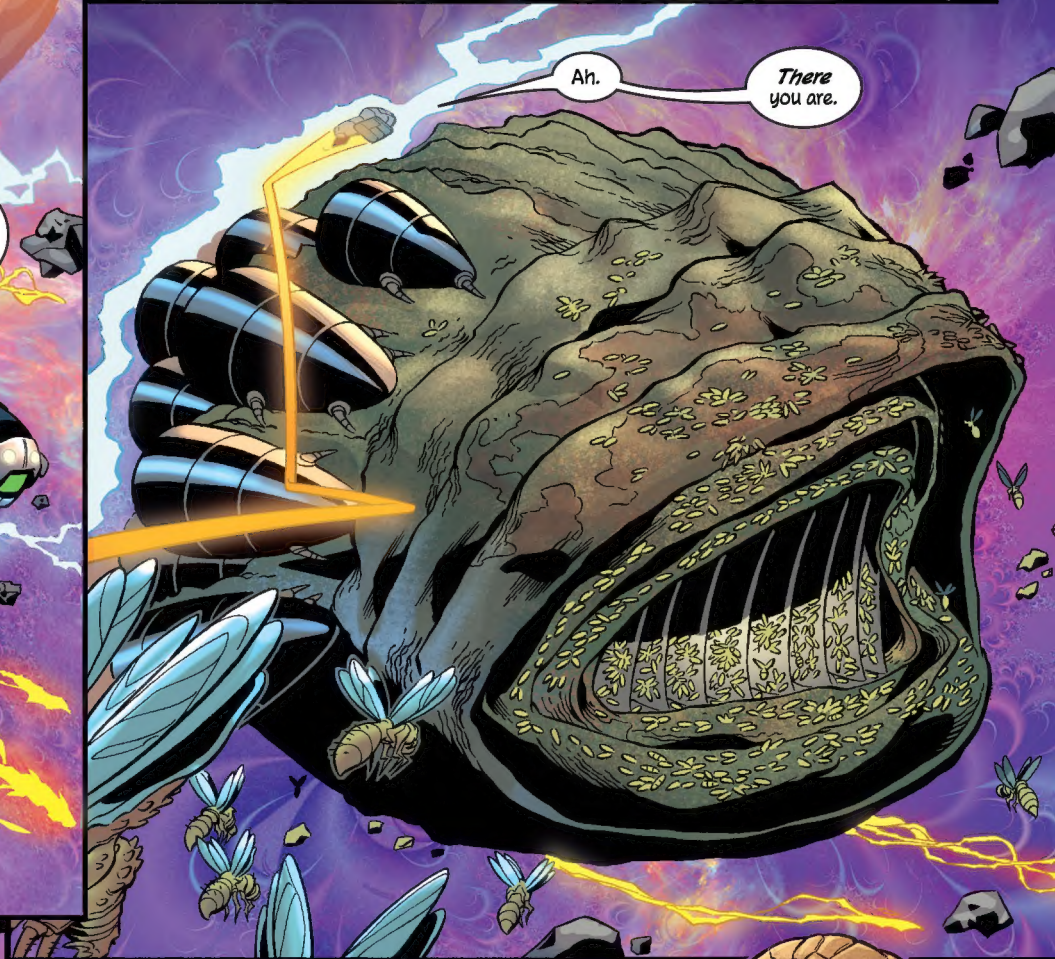
I'm *so* sorry, Mr. Shertzter. When Johnny gets worked up, his *skin temperature* rises to *uncomforta* --

What name? *GarnIEEEOW!* Quit *TOUCHIN'* me, *BIG-HEAD!*

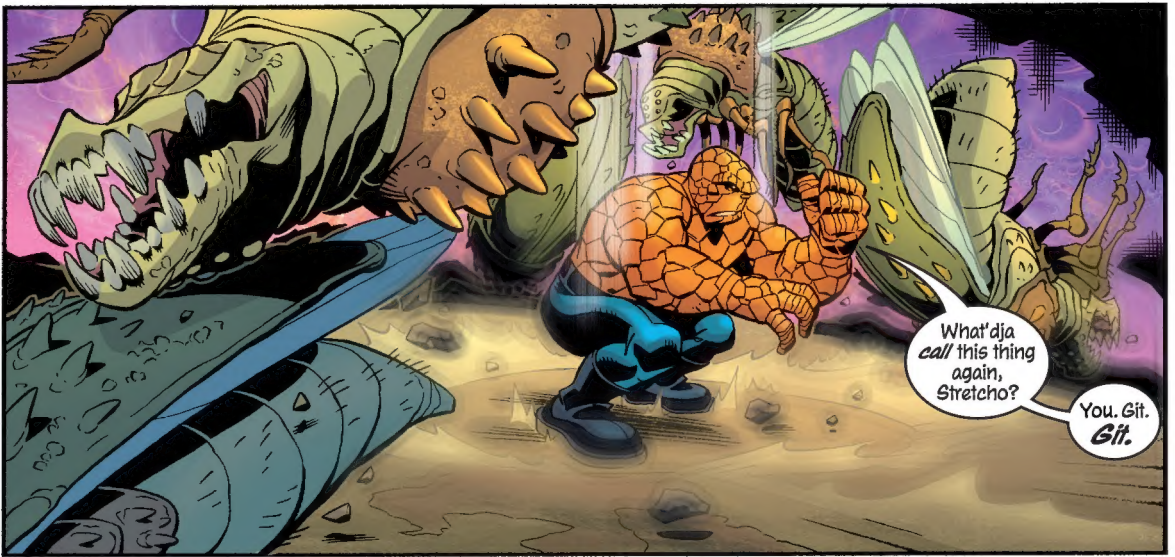
Touch. Touch. touch.

I *mean* it, you two!

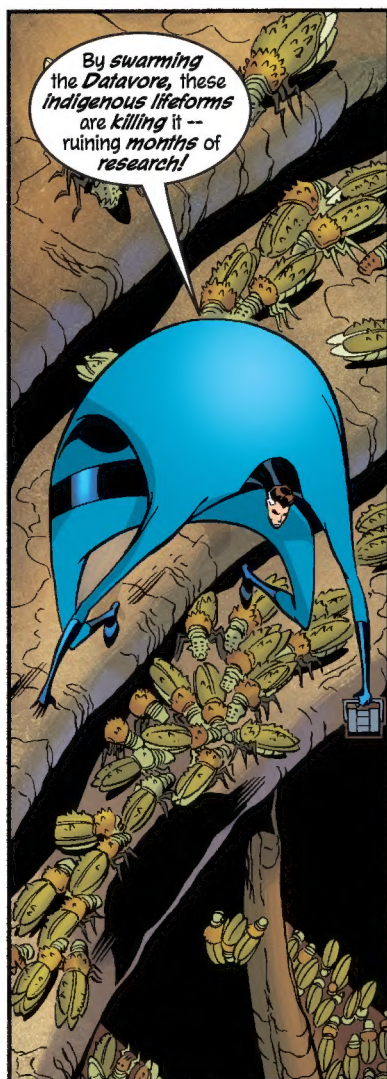




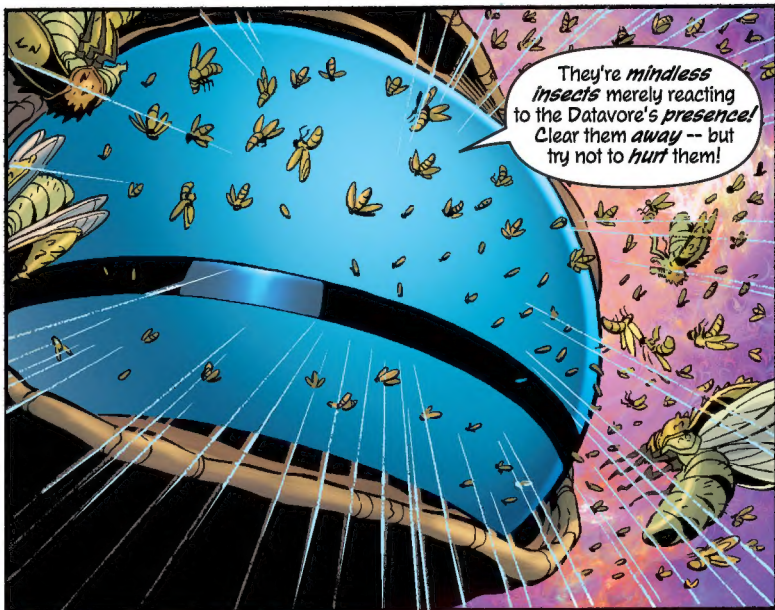




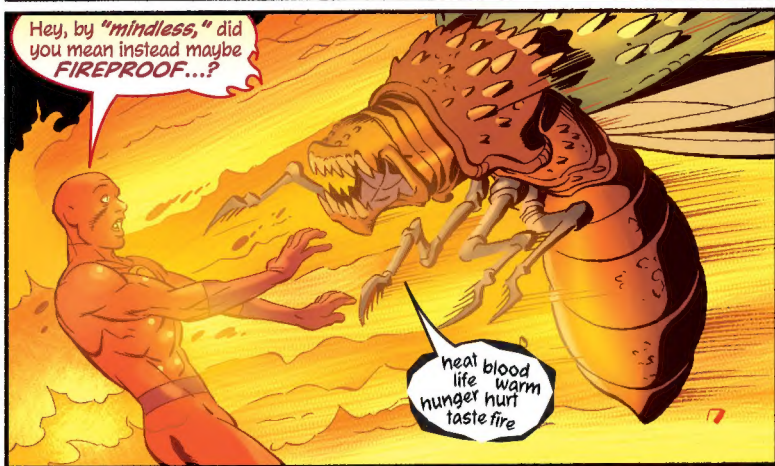




By swarming the *Datavore*, these indigenous lifeforms are *killing* it -- ruining *months* of research!



They're *mindless* insects merely reacting to the *Datavore's* presence! Clear them *away* -- but try not to *hurt* them!



Hey, by "*mindless*," did you mean instead maybe **FIREPROOF**...?

heat blood  
life warm  
hunger hurt  
taste fire



I said **GIT!**

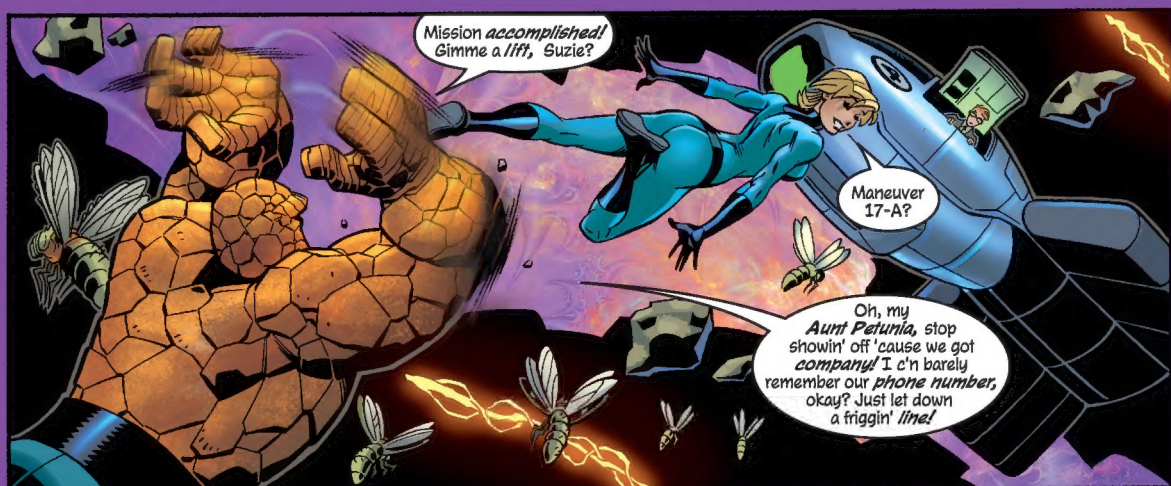
You okay, kid?

Yeah. Just...  
Yeah.



There. This should repel any further attacks. We're *done* here.

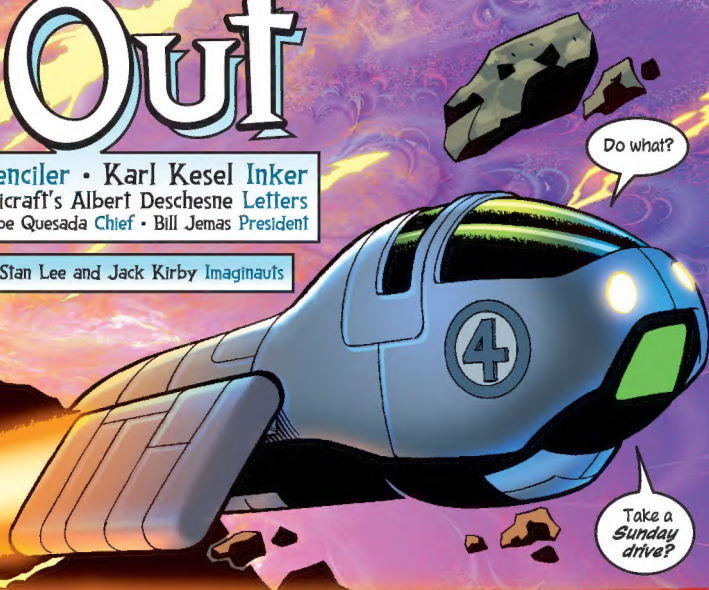




# Inside Out

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Paul Mounts **Colors** • Richard Starkings and Comcraft's Albert Deschesne **Letters**  
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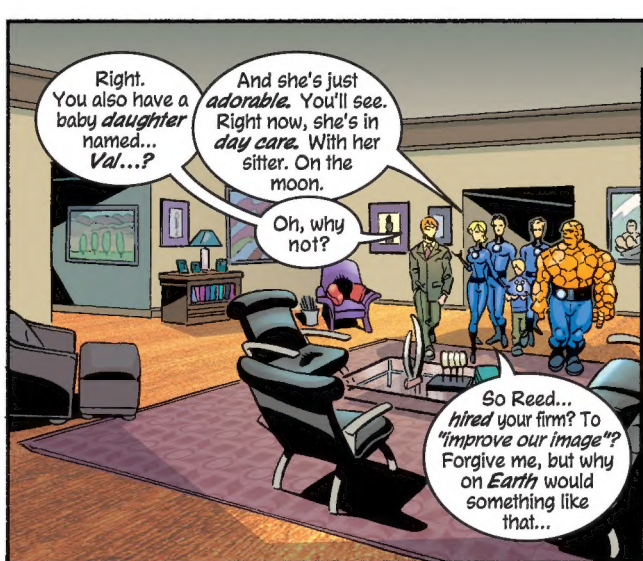
Stan Lee and Jack Kirby Imaginavs











Right. You also have a baby daughter named... Val...?

And she's just *adorable*. You'll see. Right now, she's in *day care*. With her sitter. On the moon.

Oh, why not?

So Reed... hired your firm? To "improve our image"? Forgive me, but why on *Earth* would something like that...

...matter? Because popularity is *mercurial*, Sue. People like *us* who don't periodically *reinvent* ourselves are too quickly *forgotten*.

Mr. Shertzer's been sent to *observe* us for a few days and see what might be done to keep us living the *glamorous* life.

While Fantastic Four, Inc. is a *non-profit* organization, Mr. Shertzer, *licensing* still makes a substantial dent in our R&D outlay...

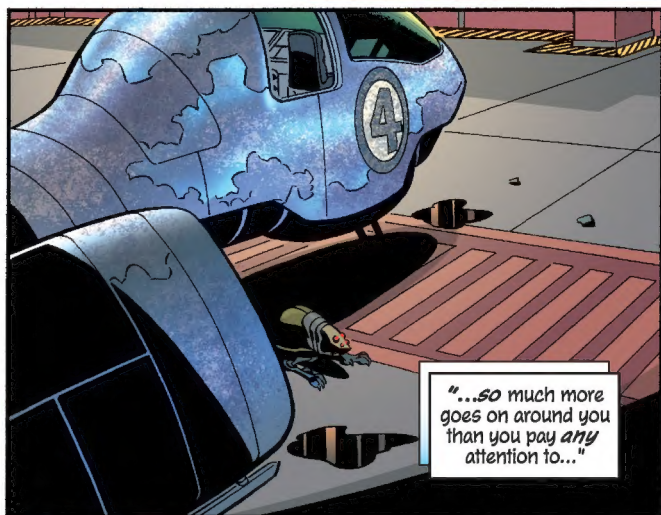


I figured *patent royalties* took care of that. Since when does Reed give a big, stretchy hock about our *Q-ratin*'s?

I know. It doesn't seem at *all* like Reed to be concerned with our... I don't know... *celebrity*. Johnny, any *thoughts*?

Yes. I have no ice cream.

*sighs* Johnny Storm...

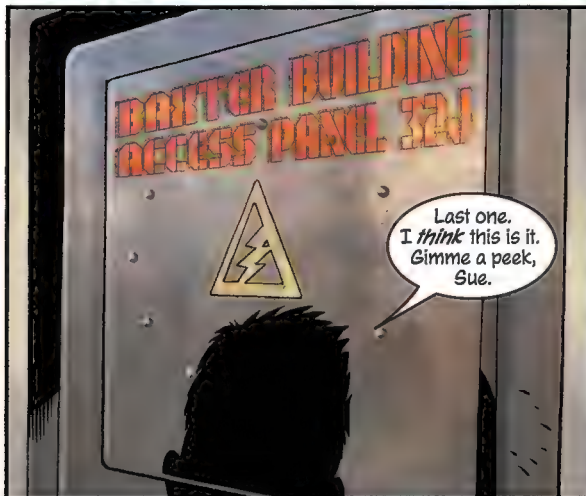


"...so much more goes on around you than you pay *any* attention to..."

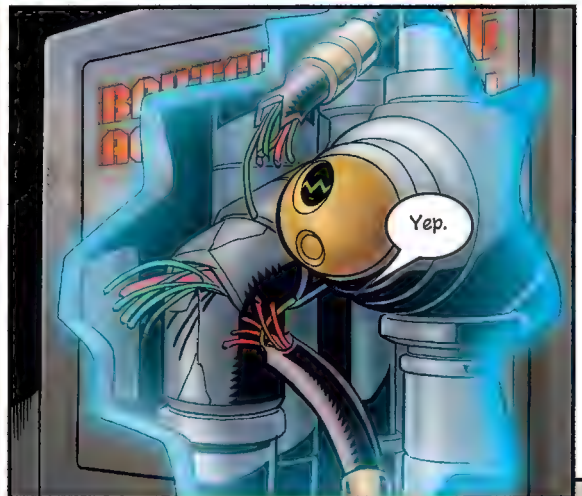




# MONDAY



Last one.  
I think this is it.  
Gimme a peek,  
Sue.



Yep.



Stupid *Mad Thinker*. He's all,  
"Your vaunted security system  
means nothing to me!" and I'm  
all, "You jerk! Who do you think's  
gonna hafta clean up your mess  
breakin' in?" and he's all, "What fools  
would put their headquarters in  
midtown Manhattan where  
anyone can get to it?"

He  
didn't say  
that.

Okay, that  
part was *me*. But,  
geez, the *Avengers*  
at least have a  
*yard*...



Stop changing  
the *subject*. Honey,  
Jennifer didn't just  
*leave*. Something  
*happened*. What  
was it?

Eh.



Johnny,  
don't *be* this  
way. I'd like to  
help --

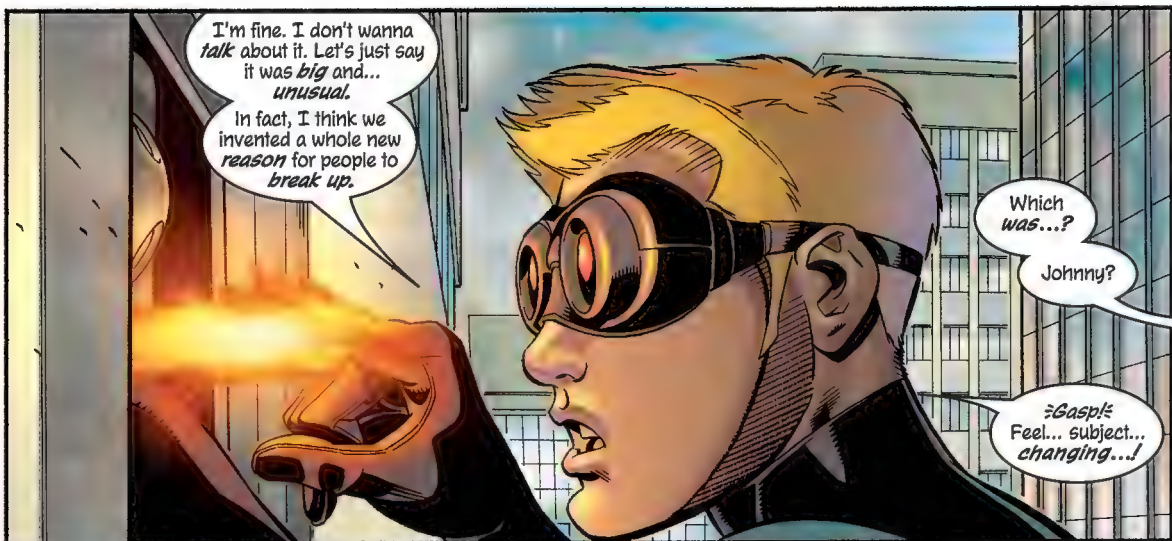
~~≠Hfff≠~~

Something  
the *matter*,  
Mr. Shentzer?

I  
dropped a  
quarter.

I think  
I killed a  
man.





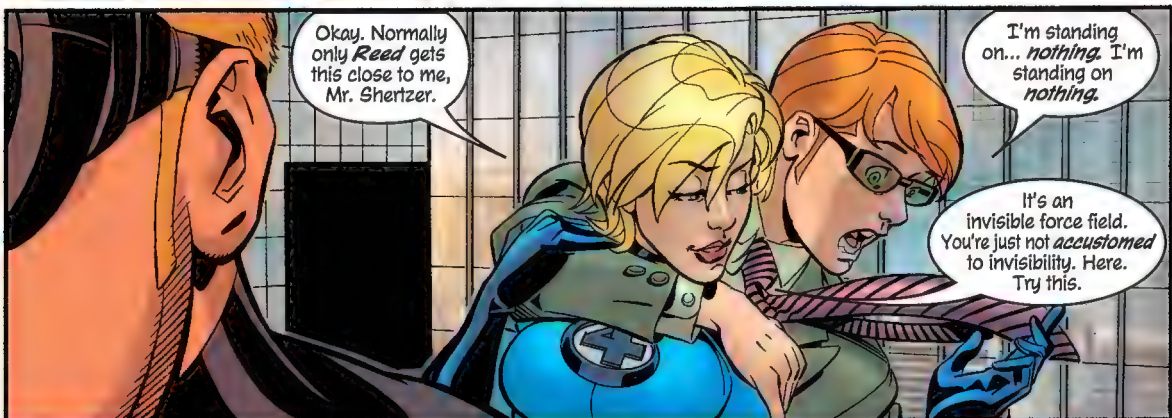
I'm fine. I don't wanna talk about it. Let's just say it was *big* and... *unusual*.

In fact, I think we invented a whole new reason for people to break up.

Which was...?

Johnny?

≡Gasp!≡  
Feel... subject... changing...!



Okay. Normally only *Reed* gets this close to me, Mr. Shertzer.

I'm standing on... *nothing*. I'm standing on *nothing*.

It's an invisible force field. You're just not *accustomed* to invisibility. Here. Try this.



AAAAAH!

Kind of fun, isn't it?

AAAAAH!

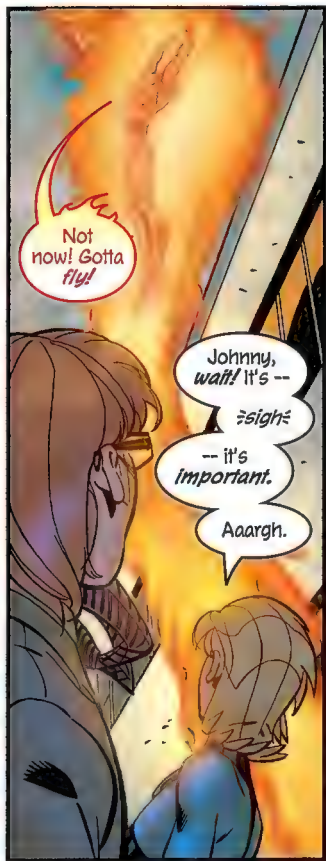


≡hmmkhh≡

Oh, that was very mature.

It's going to be a long week.

But, seriously, there's something we need to discuss about your *future*, Johnny. I have an *offer* to make.



Not now! Gotta fly!

Johnny, wait! It's --

≡sigh≡  
-- it's *important*.

Aaargh.



# TUESDAY

TO: RJJ@WEBBER.COM2  
RE: Tell my Wife I love her.

Mr Webber:  
In the moment before my certain death, I always hoped I'd hear ANGELS singing. Soothing MUSIC. NO. Here's a little something not many people know about Reed Richards when he STRETCHES:

That noise made when you drag your hand over a BALLOON...?

Ya know what'd be really good about now?

A big, steamin' cup o' gravity!

I suspect something very *similar* is what *started* this, Ben! That *liquid* all over the floor negates the *gravitational pull* of the --

Ben, look out!

A LOT of THAT. Only SLIGHTLY less unnerving...

Drag a guy outta bed at *three A.M...*

How'm I ever gonna give Tom Cruise a run f'r his money without my *beauty rest*?

...than the CONSTANT sound of a bag of ROCKS in a CLOTHES DRYER.





Johnny,  
accelerate the  
sublimation --  
fast!

English!

Boil the  
liquid! Ben,  
Sue -- anchor  
me!

Yes, you look at these guys  
from a DISTANCE, as MOST of us  
do, they're the KENNEDY FAMILY.  
You get up CLOSE...



If I don't  
catch Dr. Miro  
before he reaches  
*escape*  
*velocity* --



...they're a little more  
ADAMS than CLEAVER.

-- he'll  
hit the  
*ionosphere*  
at *mach*  
*three!*



YOU try having a prolonged  
CONVERSATION with a guy  
who's on FIRE when your  
every instinct is to tackle  
him with your COAT. If I  
live through this WEEK...

Reed,  
pull back!  
You're stretching  
too far!

Relax, Suzie!  
I got my footin'  
now that Junior  
steamed away the  
goo! I'm reelin'  
him in!

...I want  
a DOUBLE  
promotion.





Good news. I LIVED. You can stop worrying about who to give my OFFICE to.

Richards THANKED the scientists for calling him in, then immediately launched into what, digging through the ten-dollar words, sounded like a lecture on the dangers of playing with "liquid null-gravitons." And then I LEARNED something...

He wasn't invited.

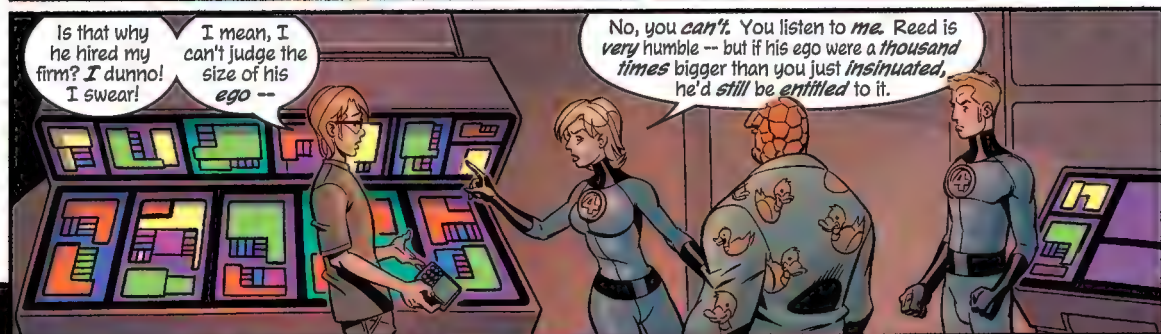
Huh?



This think-tank of geniuses. "Cause Cerebral." It's an annual event. Reed says next to the Nobels, an invitation is the greatest honor in science.

Reed's been attending since he was seventeen, but...

But ya mean those bums included him out this year? Heck, he's probably smarter'n all of 'em put together! Why would they...?



Is that why he hired my firm? I dunno! I swear!

I mean, I can't judge the size of his ego --

No, you *can't*. You listen to *me*. Reed is very humble -- but if his ego were a thousand times bigger than you just insinuated, he'd still be *enthralled* to it.



What *she* said. I'm not the sharpest tack, but I'm smart enough to know that a mind like *Reed's* comes along *maybe* once every hundred years.

I don't see any of those highbrows who called us *in* decoding *alien* languages or rewriting *Stephen Hawking*. I don't hear about *them* discovering *half* the stuff *Reed* does. Is my brother-in-law *weird*? Heck, yeah.

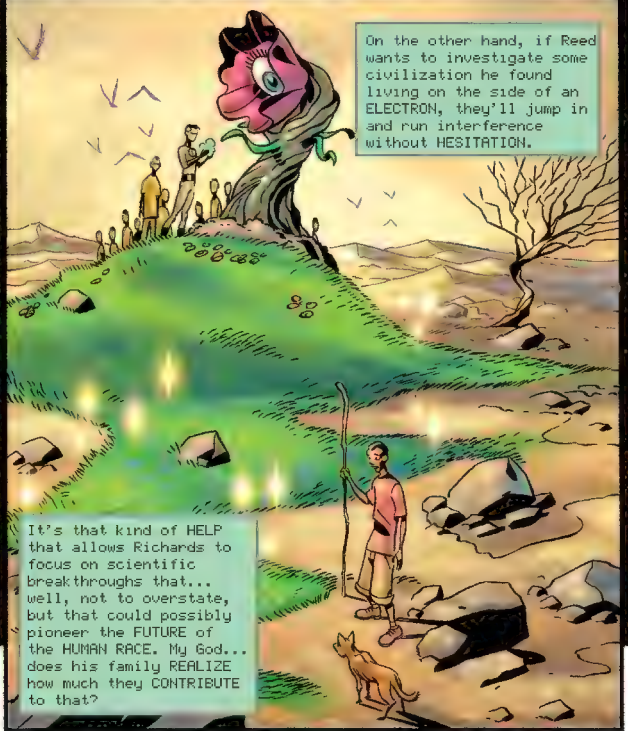
But that's the kinda weird that *changes the world for the better*, and we get the *best* seats in the house.





Not a bad SPEECH from the KID BROTHER.  
Told me something NEW...but not about RICHARDS.

Clearly, the other three are ALL adventurers at heart, but most of the time, Johnny fiddles with CARS, Sue wrestles with MOTHERHOOD, and Ben watches a LOT of WWE. They don't tend to navigate the Amazon or explore rat-infested catacombs "just 'cause."



On the other hand, if Reed wants to investigate some civilization he found living on the side of an ELECTRON, they'll jump in and run interference without HESITATION.

It's that kind of HELP that allows Richards to focus on scientific breakthroughs that... well, not to overstate, but that could possibly pioneer the FUTURE of the HUMAN RACE. My God... does his family REALIZE how much they CONTRIBUTE to that?



Is that why they do what they do?



Why'dja think?

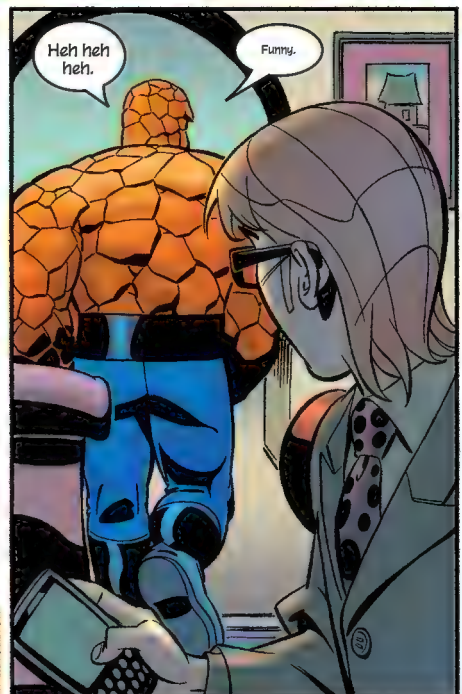
I...I...

...I...

Because you're super heroes...?



... Heh.

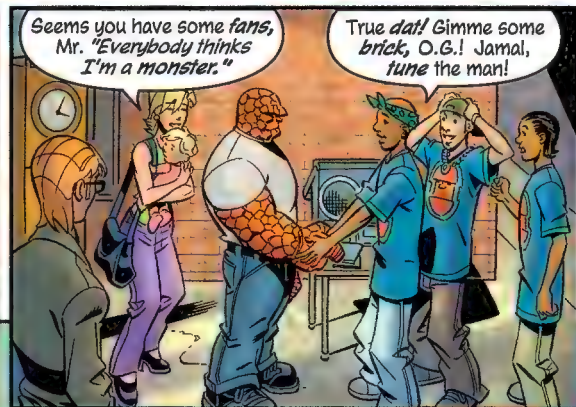
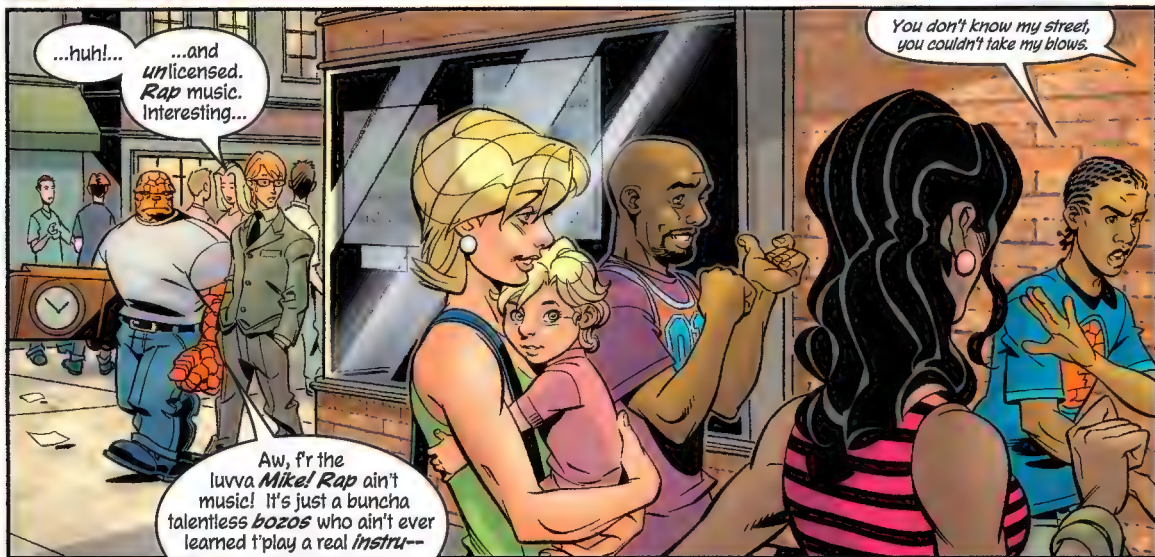
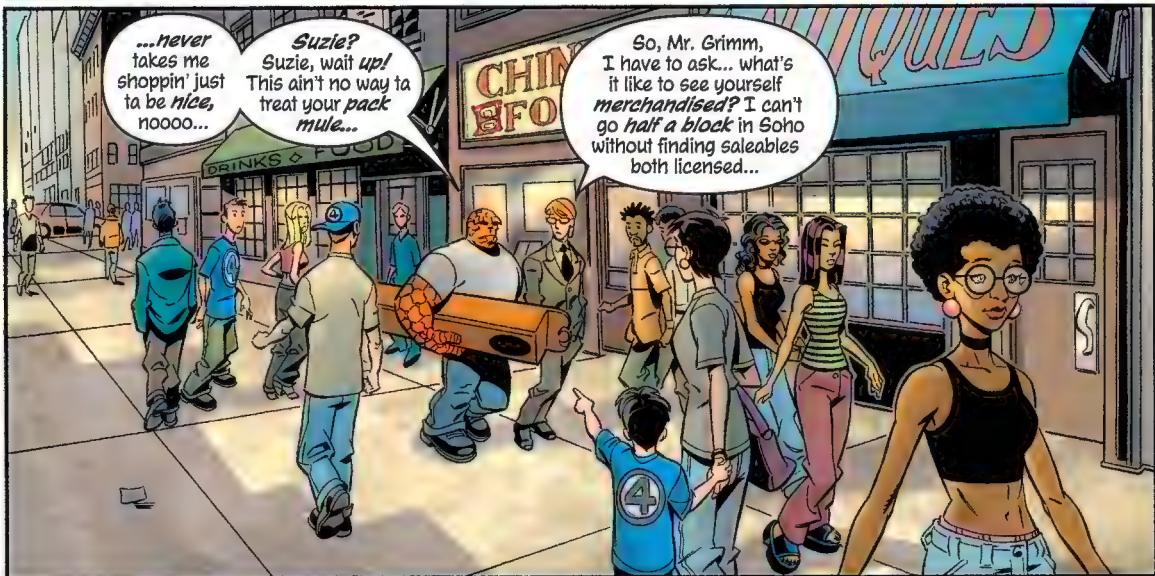


Heh heh heh.

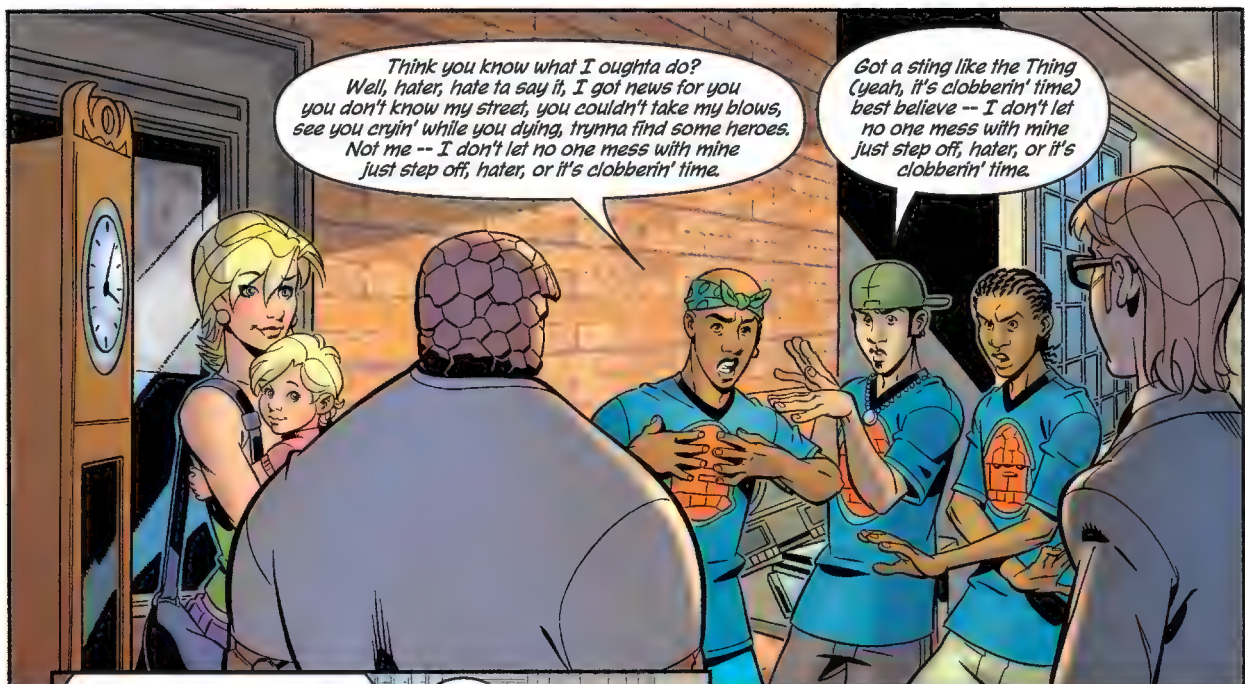
Funny.



# WEDNESDAY







Think you know what I oughta do?  
Well, hater, hate ta say it, I got news for you  
you don't know my street, you couldn't take my blows,  
see you cryin' while you dying, tryinna find some heroes.  
Not me -- I don't let no one mess with mine  
just step off, hater, or it's clobberin' time.

Got a sting like the Thing  
(yeah, it's clobberin' time)  
best believe -- I don't let  
no one mess with mine  
just step off, hater, or it's  
clobberin' time.



Don't no one tell me how to spend my days  
I've come too far to let you change my ways  
Me and my G's always up for more  
we rolling like we goin' all  
Fantastic Four.

So?  
whatcha  
think?

I think th'  
Hulk's gonna be  
awful jealous. I dunno  
what you nutty kids're  
doin'... but keep doin'  
it, I guess!

...  
Thanks,  
pal.

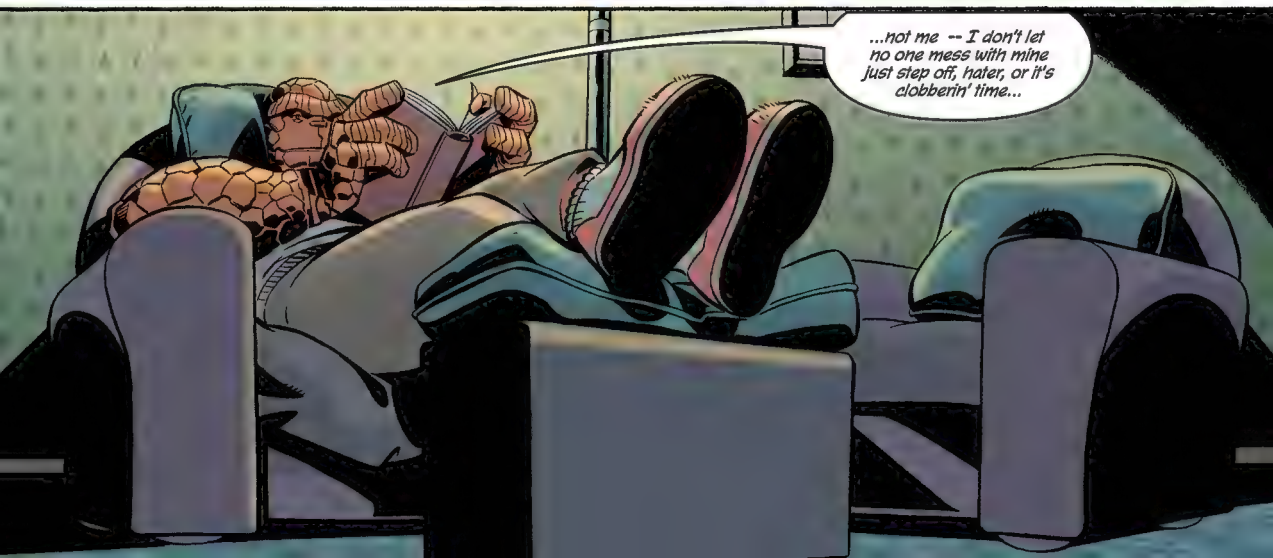


I'm surprised *you're* surprised,  
Mr. Grimm. Groups from *Linkin Park*  
to *Cypress Hill* drop your name all  
the time. They love you. Did you  
like the song?

Beats the heck  
outta that golden  
oldie, "*Alieee!*  
Get away from  
my baby!"

Aaahh, it  
still ain't nothin' but  
yakin' to a beat. Who  
c'n listen ta that  
junk?

## THURSDAY



...not me -- I don't let  
no one mess with mine  
just step off, hater, or it's  
clobberin' time...



# FRIDAY



You know what's to our credit as far as this whole husband/wife thing goes? We've developed a good system.



For example...?

Example: when you march to your own oblivious beat, I know when to trust you to wander off and when to grab you by the collar.

This is about *Sherzer*, isn't it?



How'd you know?

We've developed a good system.

You're dying to ask me why on Earth I commissioned his services.



Well...

Hey! Hey, that's them!

Can ya make it out to *Cody*? With a "y"?

No way! Gimme a pen!

Thank you, Mister Elastic!



...I believe the name "Mr. Elastic" -- whoever *he* is -- tells the tale. Call me *vain*, but I like people knowing who we are.

Can you imagine Johnny the first time someone says to him, "Didn't you used to be the Human Torch?"

Not without mentally counting the casualties. And I would never call you *vain*, Sweetheart...



...so... what *is* this about...?



**MARVEL**  
PG 1

# F! F!



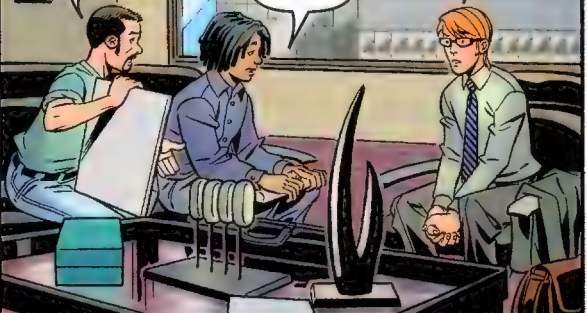
Guys...  
You're  
kidding.

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It's just a rough, but if we're gonna relaunch the comic, that's the hot look. Widescreen, authoritative.

To the extreme!

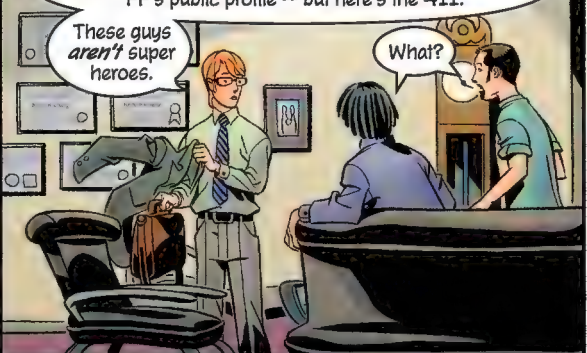
Thank you, Poochie, but no. You've got it all wrong.



It took me a week to figure it out -- during which, I'm happy to report, I've worked out some new ways to maintain the FF's public profile -- but here's the 411:

These guys aren't super heroes.

What?



Not really. They don't fight crime. They don't go on patrol. They don't have a Bat-signal.

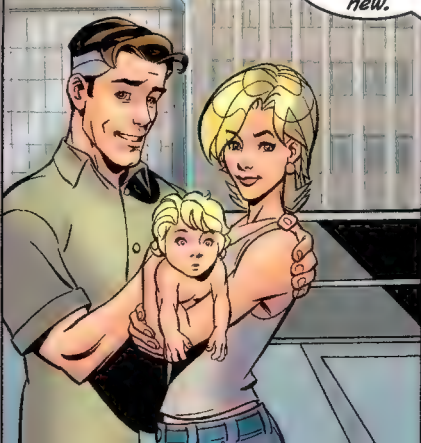
They're astronauts. They're envoys. Adventurers. Explorers. Sure, Galactus comes to town, they'll step up. Trouble finds them, they'll kick its ass.

But that's not the job. It just comes with. Ask any frontiersman, any trailblazer.

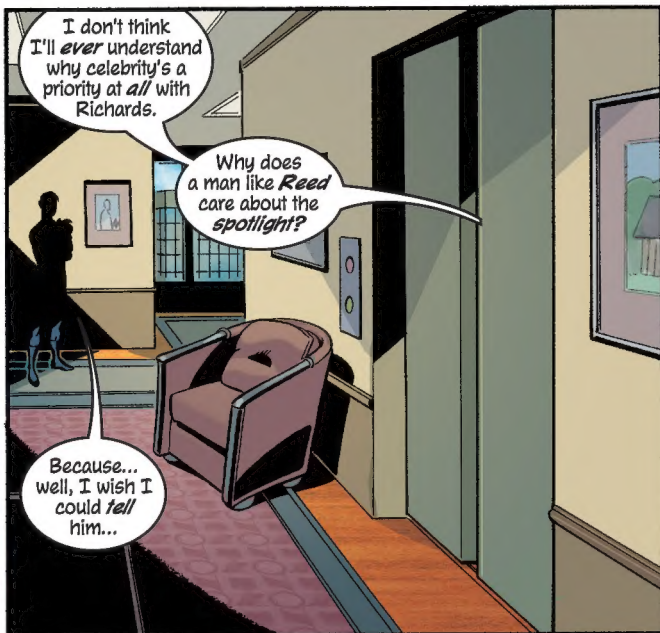
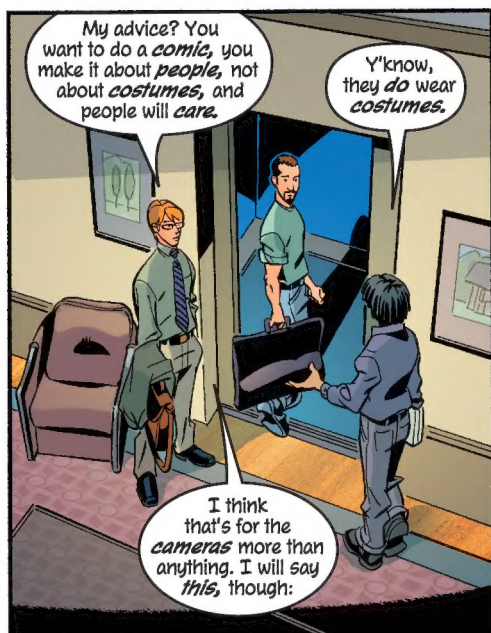


Maybe they've been around a while, but the only thing old about the FF...

...is that they never stop taking us into the new.





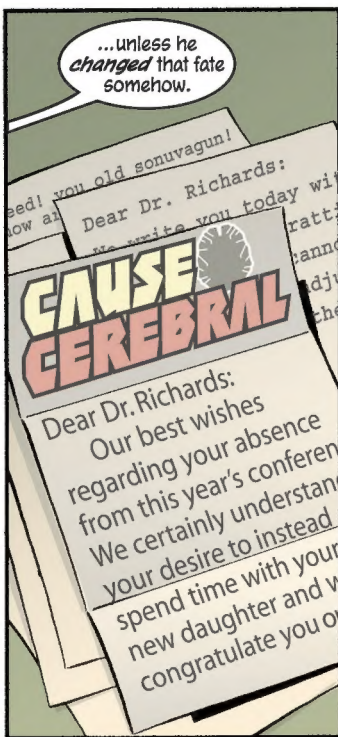






Without proper preparation or shielding, he took his *friends* through a wave of *radiation* that made them *all something other than human*.

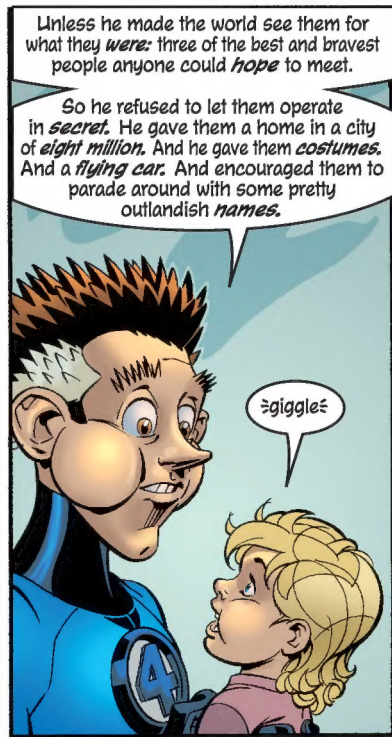
His guilt was *unbearable... and deserved*. These were the people he *loved*, and he'd *destroyed their lives*. Thanks to *him*, they were fated to be *freaks... lab specimens or worse...*



...unless he *changed* that fate somehow.

## CAUSE CEREBRAL

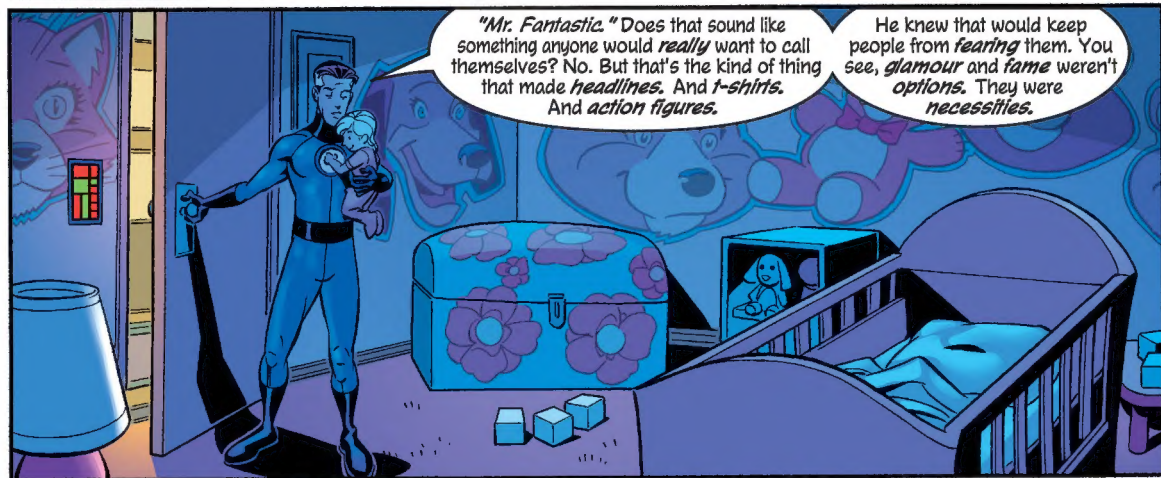
Dear Dr. Richards:  
Our best wishes regarding your absence from this year's conference. We certainly understand your desire to *instead* spend time with your new daughter and congratulate you on



Unless he made the world *see* them for what they *were*: three of the best and bravest people anyone could *hope* to meet.

So he refused to let them operate in *secret*. He gave them a home in a city of *eight million*. And he gave them *costumes*. And a *flying car*. And encouraged them to parade around with some pretty outlandish *names*.

giggles



"Mr. Fantastic." Does that sound like something anyone would *really* want to call themselves? No. But that's the kind of thing that made *headlines*. And *t-shirts*. And *action figures*.

He knew that would keep people from *fearing* them. You see, *glamour and fame* weren't *options*. They were *necessities*.



Because maybe by turning his friends into *celebrities...*

...he could be *forgiven* for taking their normal lives away.



Someday.







# 4 THOUGHTS

Welcome, one and all, to a brand new era of excitement for Marvel's First Family!

You've spent your hard-earned dime, and now you hold in your hands the start to something so exciting that we had to give it to you for the lowest price in FANTASTIC FOUR history (just to make sure you had no excuse to pass up all the fun)! And you even have a spare penny left over! Don't spend it all in one place...

Starting this issue, writer Mark Waid and artist Mike Wieringo are taking Marvel's flagship title back to the head of the fleet, with stories and ideas that would make FF creators Stan Lee and Jack Kirby proud! They'll be blazing trails to strange worlds and new frontiers—and you, lucky reader, get to jump on this wild ride along with them!

Usually, we'd use this page to read and reply to your letters about recent events in this book...but since we have so many new readers aboard this month, we thought this space might be better used to give you a look at the cool things to come! Even though we're not printing any mail this month, we still want you to get out your pens or jump online and write in

(to the address below) to let us know what you think about the issue, the series, the characters and the creative team! We want to hear from you, our Fantastic Fans... 'cause we're nothing without you!

If you enjoyed this issue as much as I did, here's a tip: **SHARE THE LOVE!** Head right on back to your local comic shop or newsstand and grab a bunch of copies of this issue to give to your friends, family, neighbors and co-workers! Pass them out at show-and-tell or slip them into mailboxes at work! You'll be the swellest guy or gal in town! Hey, they're only 9 cents, right? So what do you have to lose? And if you write in and let us know what cool things you did to spread the joy of FANTASTIC FOUR, we'll do our best to print your selfless story right on this very page in an upcoming issue!

Finally, just a reminder: the fun continues next month in FF #61—and we want to see you back here! If you liked this issue, then the next issue is absolutely going to blow your mind, so you better not miss it! Sure, starting next month FF will be back to its regular monthly price (that's \$2.25 in the US), but believe me...you'll be getting your money's worth! And in case you don't believe me, check out the rest of this page for a preview of what's to come in the pages of FANTASTIC FOUR!

Well, that's my 9 cents! See you next time!

Marc Sumerak  
Assistant Editor



MARC SUMERAK & ANDY SCHMIDT  
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## NEXT-ISSUE:

A FAMILY DIVIDED! THE THING VS. THE HUMAN TORCH!! JOIN US FOR THE MOST GRIZZLY ENDING THAT JOHNNY STORM COULD POSSIBLY IMAGINE!!!



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